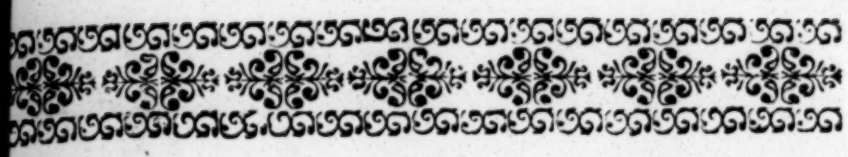
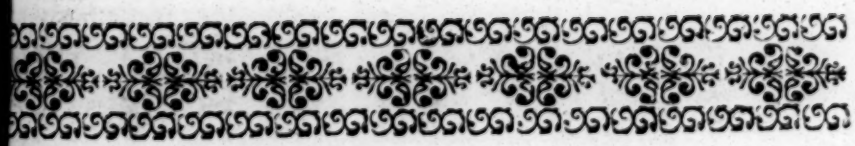


1 Halcott
No. 152
my



THE
Royal CAPTIVES.
A
TRAGEDY.



Price 1 s. 6 d.

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6
THE

Royal CAPTIVES.

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the

NEW THEATRE

IN THE

HAY-MARKET.

*O felix una ante alias Priameia virgo,
Hostilem ad tumulum Trojæ sub mœnibus altis
Jussa mori !* —————

VIRG.



LONDON:

Printed by E. SAY for the AUTHOR. 1729.

CHD

RECAPITULATION

RAYBOLD

MEMORANDUM

FOR THE RECORD

IN THE MATTER OF

THE ESTATE OF

JOHN RAYBOLD

DECEASED

BY WILL

AND IN THE MATTER OF

THE ESTATE OF

JOHN RAYBOLD

DECEASED

BY WILL



T H E
P R E F A C E.



HERE never was, I believe, any Piece, that more needed a Defence than this, nor any Author less able or less willing to defend his own Works than myself. Therefore without making any impertinent apology for my Errors, I shall submit it to the judgment of the candid Reader; Candid I call him, because I hope he will be so to the incorrect Performance of so injudicious an Age as sixteen, at which this Play was wrote.

IT may probably be ask'd, how I came to undertake such a thing, when the same Subject has already been chosen for an *English* Tragedy? All that I can say to that is, that I never heard of that Play, 'till I had made a considerable Progress in this. The Gentleman that wrote, or rather translated that Play (for excepting the first Scene, there's hardly a thought of his own, but all *Euripides's*;) This Gentleman, I say, seems to have been of the Opinion of *Rapin* and
Mr.

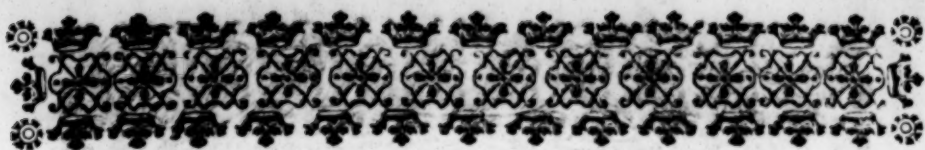
The P R E F A C E

Mr. *Rymer*, that Love is beneath the dignity of a Tragedy : but (as a good modern Critick observes) if *Virgil* did not think it beneath the dignity of his Heroic Poem, how can it be beneath that of a Tragedy, which certainly does not exceed the Epic Poem in Dignity ?

IN the disposition of the Incidents of the Plot I have follow'd *Euripides* ; yet not in a servile manner ; but have sometimes boldly ventur'd to leave the Steps of so great a Master, in compliance with the Humour of the present Age. Still I have endeavour'd to keep so close to his way of writing as to avoid all turgid Expressions, and bombast Flights.

THIS Play had the misfortune of being perform'd very imperfectly : some Scenes were left out, and others so intolerably mangled, that 'twas impossible for any body to make any thing of it. Therefore tho' I confess, that so incorrect a Work can't bear the test of a serious Perusal ; yet I print it to let the Town see, that I did not write such incoherent Nonsense as the Players acted.

T H E



THE
PROLOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

O *F all those Arts which antient Times can boast,
Of all that Learning, which to us is lost,
Athens Chief Mistress reign'd, — And reigning
Each virtuous Man exalted to a God: [show'd
Her Tragick Scenes with matchless Art display'd
Vice justly punish'd, and Jove's Will obey'd:
The antient Demigods from death reviv'd
Again their Battles fought, again they liv'd:
From hence Euripides his Praises drew;
His Model just, and all his Colours true.*

*Brave Hector's Death has call'd forth many a Tear,
And Priam's Fall has wounded ev'ry Ear:
Strip'd of her Pomp to night there shall be seen
The falling Grandeur of a captive Queen;
And what may more your kind compassion move,
Courage and Virtue fire the Heroe's Love;
But yet so gen'rous Flames unhappy prove. }
Like a poor Lamb at the appointed time
Led to the Altar for another's crime,
The wretched Virgin falls a Sacrifice,
And by her Wound th' ill-fated Heroe dies.
Now if the Muse in humble strains shall flow,
And neither rise too high nor sink too low;
Let no misjudging Tongue the Poet blame,
He's this to say, — that Nature was his aim.*

Drama-



Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

AGAMEMNON.	Mr. <i>Hulett.</i>
POLYMNESTOR.	Mr. <i>Gillow.</i>
PYRRHUS.	Mr. <i>Giffard.</i>
PISISTRATUS.	Mr. <i>Hill.</i>
ULYSSES.	Mr. <i>Machin.</i>
TALTHYBIUS.	Mr. <i>Williams.</i>

W O M E N.

HECUBA.	Mrs. <i>Carter.</i>
POLYXENA.	Mrs. <i>Purden.</i>
IRIA.	Mrs. <i>Mann.</i>
BECILLA.	Mrs. <i>Mountford.</i>

SCENE the Chersonesus of Thrace.

T H E



THE
Royal CAPTIVES.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE, *a wild Country*, POLYMNESTOR'S
Tent in view.

POLYMNESTOR *solus.*



AIL to th' auspicious morn! — Rest
all my fears
In *Polydore's* deep grave. — This morn
the sea
Recciv'd his infant body; and this
morn

His blood came rushing from the wound, my sword
Had made, and gave me all his pond'rous treasures.
The Obstacle's remov'd, the prize is mine.
Rejoice then, *Polymnestor*; then let gladness
Appear in ev'ry face. Banish the clouds
That hang upon your brow. None bars your way
To wealth: For *Priam's* dead, his son is dead,
Sunk in the waves, and leaves no tracks behind,
B Which

2 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Which may be backward trac'd, which may discover
The author of his death. — Yet *Hecuba*
His mother still survives. — What then? — She must
Be carry'd captive to the *Grecian* Shore,
And never know the fate of *Polydore*.
I hear a noise of feet. — Sure none can know it : --
I did it on the solitary mountains,
Where never human face is seen. — But what
Do I fear? — I hope that I have acted safe.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. My Lord, the *Grecian* Chiefs are met in council
To part the captives. — *Hecuba* is fall'n
To sage *Ulysses'* lot; *Polyxena*
The virtuous princess is a worthy prize
To *Agamemnon* : those of meaner rank
They're now disposing of. [*Exit.*

Pol. Methought at *Hecuba's* name my soul did start
With horror and confusion. — Still I tremble. —
But shall I entertain a thought, that tends
To my disquiet, while this shining ore
So glitters in my eyes, and cheers my heart?
No, I will go; I'll spend the day in joy,
And nought but pleasure shall my mind employ.

[*Exit.*

SCENE changes to a Council.

AGAMEMNON, PYRRHUS, ULYSSES.

Enter to them TALTHYBIUS.

Tal. My limbs yet tremble with their late surprize.
— I've seen *Achilles*.

Aga. Seen *Achilles*! — Ha! — What say you?

Tal. Yes, with these very eyes myself beheld him
This night, not long ago: All arm'd he was
From head to foot. — The trembling earth began
To shake and roar. — The sea too was disturb'd:
The lofty woods shook their high heads: All nature
Did

Did seem to suffer terrible convulsions :
 The gaping earth, after a dreadful groan,
 Open'd her hollow caverns, made a passage
 From *Erebus*' dark gloomy gulph, ev'n to
 These upper regions. — Shocking to behold !
Achilles' shade appears, just as I've seen him
 Oft in his life-time. — While I stood amaz'd,
 In a hoarse accent spoke these Words I heard ;
 " Whither d'ye go ? Where sail, ungrateful *Greeks* ?
 " Why do you leave your Heroe's shade unhonour'd ?
 " Revere my memory ; for know, that this
 " Neglect of me may one day cost you dear :
 " In gratitude obey my will ; and let
 " *Polyxena* be offer'd to my manes
 " By *Pyrrhus*' hand." This said, he sunk down to
 The regions, whence he came, and vanish'd,
 The earth wide gaping to receive him in.

Aga. *Achilles*' shade demand *Polyxena* !
 Sure he was born to cross my will, and be
 A plague eternal to me : Indeed I hop'd
 His death cou'd have secur'd me from his insults ;
 But not that wound, which broke the thread of life,
 Can break his deathless enmity to me.
 By *Jove* and all the Gods I swear, that his
 Cruel demand shall not be satisfy'd. —
 Why should I yield to him ? — Am I a King
 To have my will controul'd ? — Must I submit ?
 Born to command must I, like slaves, obey ?
 Go tell your Heroe, *Agamemnon* scorns
 To own Superiours. — Can his merits claim
 Pre-eminence ? — Did e'er his darts wound deeper ?
 Did he appear more terrible in battle ?
 Or did his sword with greater force cut thro'
 An host of armed foes ? — Why then should I
 Truckle to his commands against my will ?

Pyrr. O angry res'lute prince ! Is this, is this
 A due reward for a whole life spent in
 The toils of war ? Did great *Achilles* then

Serve you, and fight in your defence for this?
 Was it for this he met a certain death? —
 You know that when his Goddess mother had
 Reveal'd to him the fate's decree; that if
 He lent his aid to *Greece*, and dar'd to cross
 The watry main to the siege of *Ilium*,
 Short was his destin'd life; at *Troy* he'd die,
 And never would return: but if he would
 Avoid that danger, then might he outlive
 The antient *Pylia*n sage: Yet so he lov'd
 The cause of *Greece*, and so contemn'd life,
 That with the *Grecian* army hither he came,
 Certain of death; and dy'd there. — Not to mention
 His other infinite deserts; the Death
 Of *Hector* was sufficient; he alone
 Did more than the whole league of *Greece* united:
 Cou'd *Troy* be taken before *Hector*'s death?
 Cou'd any conquer *Hector* but *Achilles*?
 Thus did *Achilles* o'ercome *Troy*, while you
 Only demolish'd it. — If he had ask'd
 A virgin from *Mycenæ* or from *Argos*
 Free, born in *Greece*, you could not have deny'd it
 In justice or in honour: Can you then
 Refuse him *Priam*'s daughter, but a captive,
 An Enemy's and a Barbarian's offspring?

Aga. What d'you command? d'you claim is as
 your right?

Know then, that *Agamemnon*'s Actions
 Are subject to his will alone. He can
 Contemn your threats, and them reject with scorn.
 Yet still he's justice and he's gratitude. —
 If your dead father did deserve aught of me
 I freely will repay it him.
 But pray what were this mighty man's deserts?
 He always firmly oppos'd what I resolv'd;
 Ever my enemy, but ne'er my friend:
 What tho' *Achilles* might have spent a long,
 Obscure, inglorious, coward's life at home

The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

5

In ease and plenty? What tho' he did dare
To meet his death at *Troy*? Was't not his shame
That drove him hither? Would not his name be
branded

With cowardice, had he declin'd the War?
Love to *Greece* was a specious pretence;
But here's the source of all his boasted courage.
Witness his putting on a woman's habit
To hide the Heroe from the world and danger.
You say, that he alone cou'd lay great *Hector*
Prostrate in dust. But then did *Hector* fall
Because he was an Enemy to *Greece*?

His enmity to *Hector* was revenge
For young *Patroclus*' Death. He hated us
More ev'n than *Troy* itself, and never would
Lift up his sword in our defence, tho' he
Had seen all *Greece* fall in an undistinguish'd ruin.
Then how does gratitude oblige me to
Perform his bloody will? — For there can be
No bonds of gratitude when there have been
No benefits receiv'd. — Then I deny
To sacrifice the virgin he demanded;
My will and pleasure is my reason for't.

Ul. Let us not, Princes, after foreign wars
Are over, and have ceas'd to hurt our quiet,
Yet marr the joys of victory and triumph
By home sedition and domestick feuds.
Of you, *Atrides*, with a due observance
Of that your sov'reign seat and regal pow'r,
I beg performance of the ghost's request.
Consider all your conquests, all your glories,
How your great name shines throughout all the
world,

Remotest nations celebrate your courage,
Admire your conduct, and applaud your actions.
Let not your former glories all be stain'd
With the foul blot of such unkindness to
So brave a *Grecian*. He, that's truly great,
Shou'd

Shou'd you refuse these honours to his shade,
 The vile censorious World will say, you envy'd
 Admires, and loves, and honours too the brave.—
 So great a man his merited esteem.
 O if you love your fame, as all the brave do,
 Deny not this the Heroe's last request.

Aga. To your superiour wisdom, sage *Ulysses*,
 Do I submit myself: Be it, as you
 Direct and give advice. — In all my actions
 May I be guided by the good and wise;
 And still subject my nat'ral fiery temper
 To their grave conduct and most useful council.

[*Exeunt*.

SCÈNE, before AGAMEMNON'S Tent.

PISISTRATUS *solus*.

This beauteous maid, this ruler of my heart
 Seems unconcern'd, and cold, and little answers
 My fervent passion; indifference holds
 The ballance of her heart; while my unequal'd love,
 Ev'n like the ever-burning fire of *Phæbus*,
 Heats with one constant unextinguish'd flame.
 Whene'er I look upon her beauties, then
 My ravish'd soul bounds with a sudden joy,
 I'm charm'd and make myself her willing slave.
 Whene'er she speaks then my transported senses
 Forget their office, then my voice is lost,
 Then my whole frame is put in wild disorder.

Enter POLYXENA.

See how her beauty shines! See how it charms!
 O let me ever thus, thus gaze upon thee,
 Nor let such heav'nly joys cease but with life.
 Thou art my only aim. Thou art the sole
 Blessing my heart, my longing heart aspires to.—
 Whatever place is brighten'd by thy presence

There

The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

7

There is my happiness, and there my heav'n.—
O my *Polyxena*! delay no longer
Our mutual joys! Let the Priest join
Our willing hands, and love our faithful hearts.

Pol. Heav'n has design'd for thee, young Prince,
a bride

Happier than lost *Polyxena*; whom fortune
Has ever smil'd on, and all whose desires
Success has crown'd. Thy better fates forbid
Thy taking to thy arms a slave; for such
Is the unhappy state of *Priam's* daughter.

Pis. Think not, O think not, fairest of thy sex,
That riches, greatness, courts, or gaudy pomp
Are th' objects of my love; no, my heart burns
With flames more gen'rous. — Virtue join'd with
beauty

Render each other more resplendent. — These,
These charms alone enchant my am'rous heart.
In thy captivity thou appear'st more fair,
Thy sorrows add a lustre to thy beauty,
And make thy virtues shew themselves more brightly.

Pol. O think (alas!) on wretched *Hecuba*;
See how she sinks beneath her weight of woes!
O let me not still heap new sorrows on her,
Nor let her pine away in grief for me.

Pis. Resentless maid! — Do you remain unmov'd
To see my heaving sighs and throbbing heart?

Pol. Consider the confusion and the trouble
Which our ill-fated loves would bring on both
Our much offended parents; your displeas'd
Stern sire would heap his curses on you, that
You have dishonoured the noble race
Whence you derive your origine, by making
An humble slave the partner of your bed:
While poor distressed *Hecuba* — alas!
Methinks I see her tear her aged hairs,
I hear her pray'rs from heav'n draw curses on me;
The list'ning Gods comply, and I am yet

More

8 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

More wretched; for now shou'd I lose
Heav'n for my guide, and innocence my guard.—
O think, think what dire punishments the Gods
Immortal have in store for such ungrateful,
Rebelling children: Think on 'em, and dread 'em.
'Tis time we part. Farewel *Pisistratus*. [Exit.

Pis. Stay, stay, bright maid, leave me with
better hopes.

—She's gone, and with her the joys are fled,
That life can e'er afford my troubled soul. [Exit.

SCENE continues.

Enter *IRIA* and *BECILLA*.

Ir. How doubly wretched is the wife of *Priam*!
Her life is spent in groans, and sighs, and tears.
By the remembrance of her former ills
She bears 'em all again. E'en ev'ry moment
Old *Troy* is taken in her troubled mind.
What little time she sleeps is fill'd with horror.
This night, when her unequal'd grief permitted her
To take a moment's rest, she rose affrighted,
And pointing to a corner of the tent,
Cry'd, Is *Achilles* risen from the dead
Yet to torment me? —

Bec. So much her soul's disturb'd by her misfortunes,
That ev'n in sleep her fancy forms to her
These dreadful visions, and the weight of woes,
She bears, lays open to her such a scene
Of horror, as keeps gentle sleep away
From sealing up her wearied eyes; while ease
And comfort are quite strangers to her breast,
Her troubled breast. Sometimes her grief is silent,
Then does she seem so swell'd with sorrow, that
Unless with speaking and bewailing, she
Gave her heart ease, 'twou'd burst.

Ir. Methinks in her I see the very picture
Of black despair, and bitter discontent.—

But

The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 9

But hold—she rises from her bed, she starts,
And glares around with horror and amazement.
[*Exeunt.*]

HECUBA *within.*

Good *Iria* direct the wand'ring steps,
Support the old and feeble limbs of your
Distressed Queen, or rather should I say,
Your fellow slave.

Enter HECUBA supported by Women, and IRIA.

Hec. O *Jove*, that dwell'st above the starry skies,
And thou, O venerable Goddess Night,
Why am I frightened with nocturnal phantoms,
And dreadful apparitions? — O suggestion!
Why wilt thou thus torment me? — *Polydore*
My only son! my fears for thee seem to
Unfold the hidden mysteries of fate.—
My restless mind labours with anxious thoughts
For my *Polyxena*.— Yet whence proceed
These most ill-grounded fears? The Greeks have
done

Their worst. They've made us slaves. Fortune
has spent

Her quiver of misfortune on us.— We can fall
No lower than we are. We've nought to fear,
Nothing to lose, nothing to hope for.—

Then hence all these tormenting fears; be gone,
I give you to the winds; no more disturb me.—

[*after a pause.*]

But yet what doubts, and what anticipations
Of future troubles is my mind perplex'd with?
In spite of all my resolutions,
A dread of some misfortune, that will happen
To my *Polyxena*, affrights my soul,
And makes me tremble at I know not what.—

C

Enter

10 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Enter BECILLA.

Bec. O Madam! Thrice unhappy! How, in what words

Shall I relate the most unwelcome tidings,
Of which I am th' unwilling messenger?
I come with heavy heart to tell you news,
Which strike all comfort dead.—I have been told,
In the dead wast and middle of the night,
When near *Achilles'* Tomb some *Greeks* did hold
The watch; a figure, like their great *Achilles*,
Rises before 'em in bright arms adorn'd,
And ask'd (O who can bear to tell the tale
Without a troubled heart, and eyes o'erflowing?)
Ask'd for *Polyxena* to be his victim.
Some princes wou'd obey his harsh commands,
While others did oppose it, 'till at length
Ulysses, rising from his seat, persuaded
With cursed and inhuman arts, and chang'd
The resolution of the princes. Thus
They all unanimously did consent,
That your *Polyxena* should bleed t' appease
The haughty Heroe's ghost.

Ir. See where stands a monument of sorrow?
Her senses are benumb'd, her reason gone.—
O Royal Mistress, vent your troubles, give
Your sorrows ease, lest your heart burst with grief.

Bec. A sudden horror seems to chill her spirits;
She's silent, and she cannot speak. Small sorrows
Do give us leisure to complain of them;
But greater griefs, like her's, express in groans
What they can't utter. — Thou once *Asia's* Queen,
Let patience cool the raging of thy grief;
Let not thy troubles make thy suff'ring soul
Insensible; but learn, endeavour
To bear misfortunes bravely, as becomes thee.

Hec. Oh! Oh! Oh! [faints.

Bec. Wretch that I am! What have I done?

This

The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 11

This dreadful tale has stab'd her to the heart.—
But ha! See she recovers, and the vital blood,
Which had forsook her face again returns.

[*Hecuba* recovers.]

Go lay yourself at *Agamemnon's* feet ;
Haste to the altars of the Gods, implore
Their kind assistance; for 'tis they alone
Can turn the hearts of these inhuman men
To mercy and compassion ; else must you
See your fair daughter all besmear'd with blood,
Her beauteous limbs distain'd with gore.

Hec. Propitious Gods forbid ! — What tongue,
what words can

Express the anguish of my drooping soul ?
Who will defend me from these cruel men ?
What kingdom or what city will receive me ?
All will reject the wretched *Hecuba*,
Despis'd. of all ! sunk in calamities !
Whate'er my mind can think, sets to my view
Troubles and servitude, and all the ills,
Under which wretched Mortals use to groan.
Wou'd my sad soul call back to her remembrance
Her kingdom ? — that is sack'd by hostile hands,
And levell'd with the ground : I saw't destroy'd
With these my aged eyes, and burnt to ashes.
Or do my griefs sit light upon my heart,
That I've a daughter left me yet, that's sav'd
From a whole ruin'd empire ? — She is lost,
For ever to be griev'd for. — Thus let me
Think on whate'er I will, it tends to make me
Wretched. — How shall I fly these endless troubles ?
Which way shall I avoid 'em ?

Ir. See how she stands distracted in her mind ;
Environ'd with misfortunes, rack'd with fears ;
Lost in despair, and stupify'd with grief !

Hec. The light that shines in on me seems
unpleasant,
I long to leave it. — Haste my daughter, hear

12 THE ROYAL CAPTIVES.

The overflowings of a troubled heart.

Enter POLYXENA.

Pol. What mean these tears? and what these words
of sorrow?

What new misfortune are we yet to suffer?
Why with such doleful accents do you call me?
Why do you thus affright me, fearful as
Some tender bird, that dreads the eagle's coming?

Hec. O my child! [sighs.]

Pol. Declare your grief.—Is your *Polyxena*
Thought an unworthy partner of your sorrows?
Discharge on me that heavy load of grief,
That so depresses you; I'll bear it all,
And ease you of the weight.

Hec. Hear it, and dread it, my *Polyxena*.
The *Grecian* army have decreed, that you
Should fall a sacrifice to stern *Achilles'* shade.

Pol. O dreadful message! — Dire unheard of
sorrows!

Afflictions, that would rend the hardest heart!
Troubles immense encompass you around,
Nor will your child be spar'd, the only comfort
Which your hard fates have left you in misfortunes.
Yes, I must go
To the tremendous gloom of *Pluto's* realms,
There to be reproach'd among the shades below
With having dy'd a slave.—Yet is not this
What I lament; grim death I do not fear,
Most dire reproaches willingly I bear;
The greatest ills, that e'er can fall on me,
I readily despise, and only mourn for thee.

The End of the first Act.

ACT



ACT II. SCENE I.

POLYXENA *sola.*

DEATH is the wretch's refuge ; there th' unhappy,
And there alone, can bid adieu to trouble :
Yet I, oppress'd with an unusual weight
Of woes, am depriv'd ev'n of that privilege,
Common to all the wretched ; for altho'
I fly this world, yet do I leave behind
A mourning parent ; that, that mixes gall
With the sweet draught of death ; for what
Is life to me, when liberty is lost ?
Can I go fawn, can I caress the men,
That drench'd their hands in all my kindred's blood ?

Enter PISISTRATUS.

Pis. Joy of my soul ! All that my heart can wish !
The Gods best gift ! Hah ! What do I see ? What
mean
Those looks of grief ? Why rise those tender
breasts
With heaving sighs ? — And will you not grant me
But one propitious smile ? — Why wilt thou cross,
And thwart my eager passion with a look
So cold, and so disorder'd ?

Pol. Dost thou expect, *Pisistratus*, to find
Joy in the midst of sorrow, or to see
The troubled daughter of affliction chearful ?

Pis. Give to the winds these melancholy thoughts,
And let our cares be how to spend our time
In soft extatick joys, and mutual love.

Pol.

14 THE ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Pol. Love is excluded from my breast for ever.
That fills the thoughts of prosp'rous maids; but
grief

Engrosses my whole soul, and guards my heart,
Nor suffers it to feel an am'rous warmth. —

I am abandon'd to the world, and death

Alone can cheer my mind, alone dispel

The clouds of sadness, that hang on my brow.

Pis. O leave these words of grief and death. —

Because

You once was wretched will you always be so?

Will you refuse a profer'd happiness?

Pol. No; I no more will raise my drooping head,

But bend my weeping eyes still prone to earth,

'Till death shall bid my grief and life to cease.

Pis. Why dost thou still go on in this sad strain?

And speak in such a piteous accent, as

May even move th' inexorable fates

To change their fix'd decrees in pity to you?

Tell me thy grievance. — Why does that dejected

Countenance seem t' endeavour to conceal

Those bright resplendent charms? Who is't has
wrong'd thee?

O haste to let me know; that I with wings

As swift as time, and eager as the thoughts

Of an impatient lover, quick may fly

To seek my vengeance on the base offender.

Pol. *Pyrrhus* demands my blood to satiate his

Imperious cruel father's greedy ghost.

[after a pause.

Pis. Heav'ns! What do I hear? — What horrid
tale

Is it that frights and stupifies my sense?

Demand thee for a sacrifice! — It can not

It shall not be. — Surely my ears deceiv'd me. —

Was it the fair *Polyxena* that said so?

It must be true then. — yet it cannot be.

Pyrrhus was once my friend: He wou'd not, dare not
Affront

The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 15

Affront a soldier, and his friends too thus.

Pol. That he requires me for his father's victim
Doubt not: believe your hearing, and be not
Astonished and thus amazed at it: —

But think, think how this bloody cruel action
May be prevented; summon up to your
Assistance all your arts, and these employ,
(Better you can't employ 'em) to protect
The innocent from th' hands of their oppressors.

Pis. By heav'n's thou'st fir'd my eager soul, that
tho'

A thousand dangers did obstruct my passage,
I'd break thro' all to bring you some relief.
When such an heav'nly form, join'd with such
virtue,

Is injured; what ears can be so deaf,
What heart be so obdurate and so lost
To pity (the best part of us) as not
To burn with a desire of redressing
The wrongs which it has suffer'd?

Pol. Prince, spend not
These pretious moments; while you speak, the
chiefs

Become more resolute to execute
What they've decreed. Delay no longer then.

Pis. What must we part then? yes; but as it is
To meet again more happily, I'll not
Repine at my hard fate. This motive then,
And this alone will make me quit thy presence.

On any other terms I cou'd as soon
Consent to be depriv'd the liberty
Of th' open air, of breathing, or of living;
For what is breath, or life, or being without thee?
But why do' I idly spend the time, when I
Doubt whether thy life (which my soul holds dearer
Than riches, honour, glory, liberty)
Be safe?

Who

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Who knows how near thy death is (racking thought!)

While I am thus neglectful of thy welfare?

I go then, and 'till I return, may all

The tutelar deities protect you, and

All happiness attend you.

[*exit.*

Pol. Well! — If I must die, this may be my comfort;

Where e'er my soul shall be transported to,

What ever world it shall inhabit after

By death 'tis separated from the body,

It can't be more unhappy, it can't suffer

Greater misfortunes than on earth it has. —

But yet what pleasures can my soul e'er relish

Divided from my parent? What delights

Can blest *Elysium* afford me, absent

From *Hecuba*, yet conscious of her woes?

Thus life and death are equal miseries.

In life my own unhappiness torments me,

In death my parents. — O most wretched state!

Where e'er I fly, my sorrows follow me.

In vain do I endeavour to escape

Pursuing grief; it ne'er deserts my mind,

And while I seek t' avoid, I haste to meet it.

Enter PYRRHUS.

Pyr. Madam, I seldom see my friend *Pisistratus*;

His mind's unbent from all a prince's office,

And to us he lives, as if he liv'd not.

'Twas but this morn we miss'd him at the council.

I'm told, that your too fatal charms have robb'd

Us of *Pisistratus*, him of himself.

Pol. I shou'd be sorry, if my company

Has so unfortunately pleas'd him, as

To make the brave young prince neglect his duties.

Pyr. I am his friend; as such, I come to tell him,

He's much to blame thus to neglect the care

Of

Of all his people to indulge his passion.

Pol. Heaven forbid, that I should be the cause
Of 's people's suff'rings, or his love to me
Shou'd of the chiefs deserve the name of crime.

Pyr. Love's an infirmity, and not a crime.
Valour and virtuous love in one united
Inflame each other with more gen'rous fires.
Love spurs the Heroe on to great atchievements;
And valour crown'd with victory (returning
From the bloody field in Beauty's arms) receives
The just reward of all its glorious wounds.
But if we suffer love quite to subdue us,
And to ineroach upon our serious hours,
It swells t' a fault. — Of this I'd warn my friend.

Pol. My death, Sir, which I hourly expect, will
put
An end to all these discontents among you.

Pyr. This too I'd let him know, that what he
loves

He cannot long enjoy; he then must try
To wean himself of such a fruitless passion.

Pol. When I am dead, teach him to be content;
But don't reprove him in his rage, lest what
Was love should end in madness or despair.

Pyr. But hold, he bends this way; gloomy his
aspect,
His eyes fix'd on the ground; he slowly moves:
He's now not fit to take advice. — I'll go then.

[*exit.*

Enter PISISTRATUS.

Pol. Speak not. — I know my fate. — Too well
(alas!)

Thy paleness tells thy message: The sorrow
Thy face expresses better can inform me,
That your request's rejected by the *Greeks*,
Than the much more faint narrative of words.

Pis. O burst my heart! my soul is swell'd with grief
D Lab'ring

18 THE ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Lab'ring for vent, even as winds pent up,
And in th' earth's hollow cavities confin'd.

Pol. Farewel my mother, yes a long farewell.
The cruel *Greeks* insult our miseries.

Pis. Goddess of Love, mother of gay desires,
Your wretched suppliant implores your aid ;
If e'er you favour'd a despairing youth,
Or lent assistance to a faithful lover,
O gentle Goddess, hear this my request,
Answer my pray'rs ; and let 'em not ascend
Unheeded : O inspire me with some quick
And apt expedient to prevent the storm
Of fate that threatens us with present ruin. —
While time's our own, let's use it ; let us fly [to *Pol.*
This hated shore, avoid th' impending danger,
And in some foreign region spend in love
The remnant of our days. — Come, haste we, while
we may.

Pol. Better to die ten thousand deaths, than to
Accept of life on terms so base and mean :
For nobleness of birth ceases to be
Most truly honourable, when the person
Nobly descended leaves the paths of virtue
Trod by his valiant ancestors. — That honour
Is most to be esteem'd, which we derive
From our own merits, not what we receive
From our forefathers. Then if I forsake
My virtue, I am not to be distinguish'd
From the ignoble crowd. They live, they breath,
And draw fresh air as I do. This alone
A true contempt of death can show the world,
That *Priam's* daughter's not degenerate.

Pis. Courage unparallel'd ! —
With dread, amazement, horror, and confusion,
I must commend this fatal, rigid virtue,
That in its consequence destroys me. — O earth !
O heav'ns ! What shall I do ? Where find relief ?
Why ye (hard-hearted Gods !) fill'd you my soul
With

The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 19

With amorous fond desires? — Did you design
By disappointing 'em to make me wretched? —
But what do I say? — Why does my wild,
disorder'd,
Distracted mind murmur at Heav'n's decree?
Why stand I so? — What do I do? — Death to
my fight!

Ulysses comes the messenger of fate. —
I must be gone. — I cou'd not stay to see
Thee drag'd to death. — Farewel, *Polyxena*,
If e'er we meet again, 'twill be with better hopes.
Once more farewel. — Heav'n guard thy innocence.
[*exeunt.*]

Enter ULYSSES and HECUBA from different doors.

Ul. You can't be ignorant of what *Greece* decrees :
From the great *Agamemnon* am I sent
Ambassador, to let you know your doom.
The *Grecian* Princes claim *Polyxena*,
To purple o'er with her devoted blood
An altar rais'd in honour of the manes
Of the immortal son of *Peleus*. —
Without a vain resistance then deliver
Her up into our hands ; you know t' oppose
The *Grecian* Princes will wou'd be to strive
Against a rapid torrent bearing down
Men, countries, regions, kingdoms, all before it. —
Suppress your swelling and immod'rate grief ;
What is beyond your power learn to make
Without your care : Know that the Fates decree's
Irrevocable ; and no sword at *Troy*,
No fire, no enemy cou'd have destroy'd you,
Before that you had bore the destin'd ills,
Which you were born to suffer. — Don't repine ;
You may lament, but cannot change your doom
By sighs or tears, or any acts of grief.
They're useless all, and quite extravagant.

Hec. Now is the great, the fatal hour arriv'd,
D 2 Big

20 THE ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Big with unusual woe. — O greatest loss,
That ever the most miserable bore!
An only daughter, the sole relict of
A ruin'd kingdom! — How, how oft (alas!)
When I have little thought her death so near,
Have I with grateful voice bless'd my good stars,
That I had such a daughter left! Yet is she torn,
Torn from my longing arms and banish'd thither,
Whence she will ne'er return, will ne'er re-visit
Her wretched parent, and partake her woes.
Why do the Gods prolong my life in torment?
I have no use for life, it is my burthen. —
Methinks I wander in a lonesome desert;
Methinks I see all savages around me;
No human form appears, to sooth my cares,
And lull my anxious thoughts with soft compassion:
I, as a most unfit inhabitant
For such a joyless place, I beg the Gods,
But beg in vain, that they'd direct my steps
Straight to some hospitable dome, where I
May find some comfort in a kind reception.

Ul. O *Hecuba*, lament no more. — You'll find
in me

An easy master. I will never add
To your misfortunes. 'Tis *Achilles'* ghost,
That asks the death of your *Polyxena*:
Can we deny so great an Heroe what
His shade demands? — The world might justly
accuse us

And call us in a gen'ral voice ungrateful.

Hec. But hear, *Ulysses*, O vouchsafe to hear
The words of the distress'd. — Pity, assist me.
O give me cause to bless you. — Shew but mercy
On my *Polyxena*, and while I have
The use of voice, it e'er shall call thee noble. —
Mercy's a brighter ornament to Kings
Than crowns and scepters; these shall soon be sunk
In dark oblivion; but acts of mercy

Shall

Shall live as long as time itself, immortal
As the great Gods, whose attribute it is. —
True fortitude consists not in subduing,
But in forgiving, and in sparing foes.
If man's chief excellence were but to conquer,
And treat inhumanly the conquered,
He differs not from beasts, nor does deserve
A better name than they; the hardy lion
Thro' the wild forest seeks his prey, he catches,
Kills, and devours it: if man does no more,
Why is he call'd the head of the creation?

Ul. Mistake not friends for Enemies, *Hecuba*;
I am your friend, and think me not your foe. —
Mercy, I grant, shou'd teach to spare your daughter,
But less ties shou'd of course give place to greater.
What tho' my tender heart compassionates
Your wretched state? yet does my gratitude
Tell me; what e'er *Achilles* shall command,
My will ought to obey, and give performance.

Hec. O talk not thus, *Ulysses*; 'tis not pity
To me, but an obedience to the Gods,
Forbids this bloody and inhuman action:
As they are merciful they hate the cruel.

Ul. 'Tis certain, that the Gods will be displeas'd,
Shou'd we deny discharging these last duties
Due to so great a chief; Ingratitude and
Obedience to the Gods can never be the same.
Consider, how much 'tis we owe *Achilles*;
By him our enemies were overcome;
By his right-hand our kingdom was protected;
'Twas he, that for his country bravely fought;
'Twas he at last, that by the undermining
Arts of your son was treacherously murder'd.

Hec. O let my pray'rs, my tears, change your
resolves;
Or let my daughter's sex, her innocence,
Plead much in her behalf. — O mercy, heav'n!

Ul. Words can't prevail. — What Greece has once
decreed

It

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It never will revoke ; but still remain
Firm, fix'd, and constant to its purpose, sure,
As the immutable decrees of fate.

Hec. O ye inexorable men ! Are these
Are these your boasted virtues ? Is't for this,
The nations all around are call'd Barbarians ?

Ul. *Hecuba*, no more.
Surrender up your daughter, and resist not :
You ask in vain, and you resist in vain.

Enter POLYXENA, IRIA, and BECILLA.

Hec. Daughter, my words fly upwards disregarded,
Nor can they mollify th' obdurate heart
Of this inhuman man. — O cruelty !
'Tis you alone, that reign within the hearts
Of these, these unrelenting *Grecians*.

Mercy's no more on earth, but 's fled to heav'n,
And dwells among th' immortal Gods alone. —

Polyxena, try thy persuasive arts,
Go and embrace *Ulysses'* knees, and beg him,
That he wou'd spare your life ; remind him too
Of his own offspring, and he surely knows
The parent's fondness for an only child,
Their cares, their fears, and all their anxious
thoughts.

Pol. Hard-hearted cruel man, he stands unmov'd
At all our troubles ; never drops a tear,
Nor shows one pitying look at our misfortunes. —

Ulysses, you seem deaf to all the pray'rs
Of the distress'd ; thou worse than senseless things :
The beasts to thee compar'd are mild and gentle ;
For there's no beast that ranges o'er the forest
In quest of prey, so fierce, so wild, but has
Some touch of pity ; but thou, thou hast none,
And therefore art more barbarous than beasts. —
Think not that fear of death can prompt me to
Plead for my life ; for what is life to me ?
I'll follow you, and chearfully resign

My

My breath; for to choose servitude and chains
Before an honourable death, discovers
A mean and grov'ling soul: Can then a princess,
Once educated in the shining pomp
And splendor of a court, ask for a life
Of Slavery? — A slave! — O heav'ns! — That name
First gave me resolution more than female,
And courage to condemn the sting of death.

Hec. Well then, *Ulysses*, if your stubborn mind
Is grown inflexible, and you remain
Resolute to offer up an human victim
To dire *Achilles'* ghost; let but my daughter
Escape this hard, this cruel horrid fate;
I come a willing sacrifice; 'twas I,
That bore young *Paris*, *Paris* flew *Achilles*.

Ul. *Polyxena's* demanded by the hero; —
If we don't offer her, we disobey him.

Hec. Then if my daughter must die, let us not
By death be separated, who in life
Were ne'er divided; but let us descend
Together to th' *Elysian* Shades, companions
In the last final journey.

Ul. Beg not your death of us, O *Hecuba*,
We grieve, that by necessity we're forc'd
To take thy daughter from thee; nor yet wou'd we
Do it, but that we owe so much to him
In gratitude.

Hec. What ever bonds of gratitude you break
For mercy's sake, the Gods will soon forgive:
This seeming vice becomes a real virtue.

Pol. Endeavour not, my wretched parent, to
Resist superiour pow'r and force; consider,
Tho' born to rule, we're now no more than slaves,
And subject to the haughty victor's insults. —
Now let us join our hands, which when once parted
Will never join again: behold your daughter
Laments her death, only because she leaves
You comfortless in life. — Farewel for ever,

I must

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I must depart to everlasting night.

Hec. But I shall still remain in slavery,
And on the earth here spend my future time
In troubles never ending, 'till kind death
Secures me from their insults.

Pol. Alas! my parent, how, how shall I leave thee?

Hec. Tho' thine is hard, mine is the harder fate.
Leaving a wretched life and wretched parent,
You fly t' a lasting stock of happiness;
But I leave thee, and still remain in mis'ry.
The fatal stroke of death falls heavier
On the survivors, than on them that bear it;
For grief, and tears, and sighs is left to those;
These find a final rest from all misfortunes.

Pol. Farewel those arms, that have so oft em-
brac'd me :

My mother, happy be thy future hours;
What, said I happy? That's beyond my hopes.
But may'st thou (I beg of propitious heav'n)
Be blest with all the comfort, that so wretched,
And so dejected a condition can
Admit of; may my brother *Polydore*
Support thy feeble age in *Polymnestor's*
Most wealthy court.

Hec. Ay, if he lives; but much I fear his safety.

Pol. He lives to close thy eyes, when thou shalt die.
Farewel for ever. Heaven be thy guide,
And comforter in all thy future life.

[*ULYSSES leads her off.*]

Hec. My grief is greater than e'er mortal knew;
For all my comfort's fled away with you.
Poor *Hecuba* lives, despairing of relief:
Thrice happy they, whose fortune was so good,
To end their lives under the walls of *Troy*,
And with their lives their troubles.
But O! How mis'erable is *Hecuba*,
Who's given up into the hands of foes,
And subject made to servitude and bondage!

Why

The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 25

Why dy'd I not with thee, my much-lov'd
Priam?

Why left I not this life with thee, O *Hector*?
Why do I yet endure the hardships, and
The mis'ries of this world? Is't *Jove's* decree?
Can *Jove* be pleas'd with tormenting me?
Or is it the delight of heav'n to see
Me the most miserable and afflicted?
If not, why are all things so disordered,
That they by consequence must heap new troubles
Continual sorrows on my wretched head?
Death is the pleasing lot I seek to draw;
The grave's the home, which I am travelling to;
And the dark shades of hell my place of rest.
Then why do I yet live? Why plunge I not
A sword into my breast? — But still, methinks
I feel a sudden horror seizes me,
When e'er I represent unto my mind
The image of grim death; I wish my self
Dead and departed from this tiresome life;
Yea death I fear; I fear, but know not why.

Ir. O wretched queen have mercy on yourself;
Vouchsafe to grant yourself a moment's ease;
Let gentle comfort soothe this grief. — O try
To raise your head amidst this sea of troubles.

Hec. Comfort's for persons much less miserable.
A kingdom's, children's, and an husband's loss,
Are griefs too great to be reliev'd by comfort.

Ir. Seek not those things which cannot be re-
gain'd.

Hec. My only joy and hope is gone. Alas!
The future time in sorrow I shall pass.
So some strong lyon in the silent Woods,
Where silver *Xanthus* glides in gentle floods,
Seizes a tender fawn, and drags away
Into his dreadful den his frightened prey;
The wailing dam her dying young bemoans,
Makes the woods ring with her repeated groans;

E.

In

26 THE ROYAL CAPTIVES.

In ev'ry place is heard her trembling cry,
She wanders up and down, and longs to die.

The End of the second Act.



ACT III. SCENE I.

A Plain; ACHILLES' Tomb in view.

*Enter AGAMEMNON, PYRRHUS, TALTHYBIUS,
and Soldiers.*

Pyr. **H**ERE, fill me up this goblet full of wine.
— But see, *Ulysses* comes.

Enter ULYSSES and POLYXENA.

Ul. Behold the beautiful young virgin, *Pyrrhus*,
Decreed t' appease your angry father's ghost.

Pyr. Now heav'n assist me, while I pay these last
Sad duties to my great and worthy father. —
Talthybius, bid the army all be silent.

Tal. Ye Greeks, these sacred rites require your
silence.

[*Here PYRRHUS takes POLYXENA in one
hand, and a goblet of wine in the other.*

Enter PISISTRATUS.

Pis. Hold, *Pyrrhus*, if you would preserve your
own,
Save this young virgin's life; or know, thou
haughty
Imperious youth, I wear a sword, that can
Revenge its master's wrongs. Beware, and promise,
That

The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 27

That you'll not prosecute your cruel purpose,
Or life and breath's not thine.—The mistress, whom
My soul thinks half her self, she must not, can not,
And will not part with. Then desist, and render
The virgin back to me, or by the Gods
(Witnesses to your inhumanity) I swear,
I'll sheath this ponyard in your villain's breast.

Pyr. Why offer you this violence, thou rash,
Unthinking prince: Know that your rage misses
Th' intended mark, and turns upon it self:
Your anger is to me, as arrows shot
Against some rock; which may break their own force,
But ne'er can hurt th' impenetrable stone.

Pis. *Pyrrhus*, no more.—Or you, or I must die.—
She shall not thus be lost.—I'll rescue her,
Or boldly meet my death in the attempt.—
What's life without her? On her smiles I live;
By her I move; she is the soul that actuates me;
Without her I should be but half my self,
And at her death my better part is lost.
Dare then to meet the fury of my sword.—

Pisistratus once dead, *Polyxena*
May be thy father's victim; but while he
Draws vital air, you'll claim her but in vain.
Answer me with your sword, or death expect
From th' hands of th' injur'd *Pisistratus*.

[*PISISTRATUS* offers to kill *PYRRHUS*.
AGAMEMNON holds his arm.

Ag. Hold; I command thee hold, *Pisistratus*.
What mean you by this outrage?—What wou'd your
Violent rage have done?—Here guards, quick seize
This mutinous young prince, and well secure him.

[guards seize *PISISTRATUS*.

Pis. Unhand me, villains.—O *Polyxena*!—
Stay, let me speak to *Agamemnon* then.—
O Great *Atrides*, O let me conjure you
By your dead father's shade, and by your hopes
Of future greatness in your son *Orestes*,

28 THE ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Deny me not a last embrace ; remember
The pangs of love you felt, when fair *Chryseis*
Was hurry'd from your arms : let the remembrance
Of your own love raise pity in your breast,
And move you to compassionate my pains.

Aga. Guards, speedily convey him hence. Away.

Pis. Gods ! what not grant me one, not one
embrace ?

Infection's blast thee ! All the wrath of heav'n
Fall heavy on thy head ! — May all the curses,
Which the Gods have in store for the unmerciful,
Be heap'd upon thee. — But farewell, bright maid,
How can I live without thee, how survive thee ? —
Rogues, let me go ; where will you drag me to ?

[guards drag him out.]

Pyr. Thou son of *Peleus*, my deceased father,
Receive these our libations, which we offer

[pouring out the wine.]

In honour of thy sacred memory ;
And let the virgin, which we sacrifice,
Obsequious to thy will, appease the anger
Of thy incensed shade. — O be propitious
To us ; grant us a safe and quick return
Unto our native country. —

Pol. Ye *Greeks*, and Warriors, hear my dying
words. —

I willingly can bid adieu to life. —
But O by all the Gods I do conjure you,
Let me not die in chains a slave, a captive ;
O let me not descend to *Pluto's* realms
So basely ; let not *Priam's* daughter fall
So low. —

Aga. 'Tis granted. Then bind not the victim.
Let us be merciful ev'n while we're cruel.
She's mis'erable enough. Let us not heap
Unnecessary tortures on the wretched.

Pol. I've bore the worst, and have no more to
fear. —

Slav'ry

The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 29

Slav'ry or Death! Which shou'd I choose? — To
serve

Is base, dishonourable, and beneath me. —
To die's the lot of all; and to die bravely
The glory of the great. — Then welcome death!
I know its form: and what we know, we fear not. —
I've seen the horror of it; when, surrounded
By enemies, I saw my country burnt,
My kindred and my aged father bleed.
I've try'd the terrors of approaching death,
Calm and serene I've learnt to brave 'em all;
And without these death of itself is nothing. —
My parent's grief alone makes my death bitter:
Cou'd it be hid from her I'd bless my murd'ers;
I'd come with open arms t' embrace the hour,
The happy hour in which grim death did close me
In his cold iron arms. — But O! with sorrow
Behold the suff'rings of a wretched mother;
As ye are brave be good and merciful.
When *Hecuba* hereafter shall in tears
Ask for my body of you, restore it her,
Nor ask a ransom; while 'twas in her pow'r,
She did redeem her dead son's corps with gold;
But now let pray'rs supply the place of gold;
For pray'rs and tears is all that she can give. —
Now strike the fatal blow. — I am prepar'd
For present death. Man's tyranny is spent
In vain on me. — I have a soul, which fear
Cou'd never touch; which death cou'd never fright.

Pyr. By heav'ns such courage shewn in such
distress

Distracts my soul, and stops my trembling hand,
Ev'n when my sword is entring at her breast. —
Well then! If I shou'd save her life, I spare
A nobler soul than ever yet did warm
The breast of a Barbarian: but then
I shall dishonour the most valiant
And bravest Heroe, and the best of fathers,

Who

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Who with unequal'd courage has encounter'd
 So many dangers, bore so many hardships,
 And all for us; yes, all in the defence
 Of us and of our country.—Shall I value more
 The daughter of an hostile king, than him,
 Who was the sole protector and defender
 Of Greece against the insult of its foes?
 No, that wou'd be most vile ingratitude,
 A crime abominated by the Gods,
 And virtuous men; then let me thus avoid it.

[*Stabs* POLYXENA,

O great *Achilles*, as we have obey'd
 Your dread commands, so also hear our pray'rs,
 And O! obstruct not our return to Greece.

Aga. Talthybius, haste; bid *Hecuba* to give
 Sepulchral honours to *Polyxena*.—

Come, princes, haste we to the camp. Let us
 Prepare to fail. —————

[*exeunt*.

Enter PISISTRATUS and PYRRHUS *from opposite doors*.

Pis. Dare you behold the face of your wrong'd
 friend?

Pyr. *Pisistratus*, you have unjustly fought
 My life.

Pis. — You have unjustly ta'en my life.

Pyr. How have I injur'd you?

Pis. ——— You need not ask it.

You've wrong'd me in my love.— Did you not know
Polyxena reign'd tyrant of my heart?

Pyr. What is the brave *Pisistratus* a slave?
 Nay worse, a woman's slave?

Pis. ——— Do not provoke me,
 Lest you shou'd soon be made repent your rashness.

Pyr. What do you menace me? — Well! know
 then, stripling,

That I despise your threats. — I laugh at you.

Pis. Villain be silent, lest your tongue shou'd prove
 Your

The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 31

Your curse, and draw your ruin on your head.

Pyr. See the boy fret himself,

Pis. ——— Gods! Must I bear it?

Pyr. Your anger is my scorn.—You know, you dare
As well encounter red-hot thunderbolts,
Or war against the angry king of heav'n,
As meet the thirsty fury of my sword.

Pis. What did you say I dare not?

Pyr. ——— Yes, you dare not.

Pis. Thus let me prove you have bely'd me then.

Pyr. Nay, then I must defend myself. [draws.]

Pis. Come on. [draws.]

[they fight.]

Enter AGAMEMNON interposing.

Aga. What *Pyrrhus* and *Pisistratus*! No more.
What do you do? Put up your swords again,
And let me join your hands and make you friends.

Pis. No, by the Gods he surg'd me so, I cannot
So soon forgive him.

Pyr. ——— Go, and shew your spleen
And make yourself contemptible. — The son
Of Great *Achilles* knows not how to fawn,
And bend to others passion.—I condemn thee. [exit.]

Aga. What is it, that has thus enrag'd you both?

Pis. My disturb'd mind won't suffer me to tell
you. —

Let me retire to my tent. [exeunt severally.]

Enter HECUBA, IRIA, and BECILLA.

Bec. O cease this sorrow, and surrender not
Yourself to grief; but rather thank the Gods,
That you once had your daughter, that she did
so long

Live here to comfort you; for 'twas the bounty
Of the great Gods, that first did give her to you.
Death is the law of nature; all submit
Sooner or later to its fatal stroke:

This

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This was the time, when *Jove* was pleas'd she
shou'd

Be added to the number of the shades,
That dwell in blest Elysium; therefore
Don't persevere in obstinate condolment;
It shews a mind weak and dissatisfy'd
With the decree of *Jove*, a restless mind,
That cannot acquiesce in what's determin'd
By the immutable and fix'd resolves
Of the mighty King of Heav'n.

Hec. Prithce no more.

The counsel, which thou giv'st, does but increase
My sorrows. O talk not of patience to me.
Is not my daughter dead? — Can I be patient?
Go preach it to the winds; go bid 'em cease to blow;
Go bid the waves be still, and they'll obey you
Much sooner than my troubled soul. True, reason
Teaches, that tears cannot restore my daughter
To life, when once the vital spirit's fled:
Yet tho' we arm our selves with all our courage,
Such sudden shocks throw judgment from our breasts,
And then those passions, to which human nature
Is always subject, rule our hearts, and make us
Shed tears in the extreme anguish of our souls.

Ir. Be not dejected, Madam, but yet hope,
That time will be the cure of all our griefs.

Hec. Why shou'd I feed my self with such vain
hopes

Of things impossible? — No; let me now despair:
Hope is for fools, and I'll have none of it;
But seek some lonesome cell to lay me down
And breath my last in. — Come, thou mother Earth,
Receive me to thy bosom; thus I'll lay,
And in despair will pine my life away. [*lies down.*]

Enter TALTHYBIUS.

Tal. Can you instruct me, O ye *Trojan* dames,
Where wretched *Hecuba* is to be found?

Bec.

The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 33

Bec. See, see, *Talthybius* on the earth she lies
Now equal'd with the meanest of mankind,
Who once was thought the greatest!

Tal. See, Fortune, what thou'st done! O see,
how low

You have reduc'd the queen of mighty *Troy*!
O *Jove*, d'you live, and see, and suffer this?
Is this the consort of Great *Priamus*,
The mighty Monarch dreaded by his foes?
Is this the mother of that valiant *Hector*,
Who dar'd to combat with the great *Achilles*?
Gods! What a change is here! A lofty palace
For th' open air, where she's expos'd to all
The roughness and inclemency of weather!
Rich gaudy purple beds for the cold earth!
Her soft and downy pillows chang'd for dust
And stones, on which she lays, but cannot rest
Her wretched head! — But hold; I must perform
The orders of our chief. — Ho! *Hecuba*,
Awake, arise, and listen to me well,
While I impart what does concern thee near.

Hec. Who is't, that thus disturbs my rest?

Tal. I come an herald from the *Grecian* army,
To tell you the commands of *Agamemnon*.

Hec. [*rising.*] What have the *Greeks* decreed, that
I shou'd die?

Thus murder once will be an act of goodness:
Tis this alone can make me bless the *Greeks*,
To free me from this tedious load of care,
And to transfer me to an happier mansion,
Where I shall with my *Priam*, and my valiant
Son *Hector* in th' *Elysian* fields enjoy
A lasting bliss; where cruel *Greeks* shall ne'er
Disturb us more, nor shall we dread the fierce
Achilles' name, nor *Diomedes*' approach,
Nor daily tremble for our country's safety,
Nor mourn our children's loss, nor *Troy*'s destruction;
Be freed from servitude, and in delights

F

Ever

34 THE ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Ever renewing spend the joyous hours ;
For tho' the great these worldly goods possess,
The wretched have in view a nobler happiness. —
Come haste and lead me to my destin'd death.

Tal. Far diff'rent is the message, which I bring,
From what you seem t' expect. — Your daughter's
blood

Has now appeas'd the Heroe's angry shade :
The chief descended from great *Atreus'* race
Sends me to tell you, that you may perform
Funeral rites in honour of your daughter.

Hec. I'll hope no more, for all my hopes are
vain.

Ah ! My *Polyxena* ! Then art thou gone ?
The stroke of Death alone cou'd separate us ;
And that alone can make us meet again. —
O cruel Death to rob me of my daughter !
But O kind Death to send me to my daughter !
Cruel and kind ! I hate thee, yet wish for thee.

Tal. Cease this immod'rate grief, thou wretched
mother ;

She has done nothing, that's unworthy of
Her noble father, and his royal race :
She dy'd, as did become her quality ;
She shew'd such courage, as did well besit
The daughter of a king. When *Pyrrhus* held
His trembling sword pointing towards her breast,
She smil'd and left the world calm, undisturb'd.

Hec. Thy gen'rous and brave death, my daughter,
brings

Some comfort to my afflicted heart to see,
That great souls keep their virtue to the last,
In spite of all the shocks of adverse fortune ;
Ev'n like a sturdy oak, that stands unmov'd
Against th' impetuous force of the fierce north-
wind's

Most vehement blasts ; so does a noble soul
Bear up against the threatening storms of fortune,
And

The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 35

And rises still superiour to 'em all. —

Tal. Say, *Hecuba*, what answer shall I make *Atrides*?
Why do you not prepare to give due honours
To your deceased daughter? —

Hec. ——— Beg the *Greeks*
That they would let the virgin's body lay
Untouch'd by vulgar and prophaned hands.

[*exit* TALTHYBIUS.

Ir. Shall I go fetch the dear remains of the
Deceased virgin hither? —

Hec. ——— Go, good *Iria*;
And let us wash her tender limbs, which now
Are all polluted, and defil'd with blood. [*exit* IRIA.

Hec. O see to what a wretched state the house
Of *Priam* is reduc'd! — Must I remember
My former happy state? And for what reason
I was depriv'd of it? — O heav'n and earth!
O that accursed hour, in which I bore
Paris, the bane of mighty *Ilium*,
That lustful youth, who for a foreign beauty
Consum'd his country, and who was the cause
Of a long ten years war, of *Troy's* destruction,
Of my captivity and all my troubles:
It was for him that *Hector* fought so bravely,
It was for him, that he withstood the shock
Of his o'erpow'ring foes; for him at last
He fell beneath the heav'n-assisted arm
Of great *Achilles*. — Hah! Methinks I see
The envious *Pyrrhus* rush into the temple!
He stains the altar of Olympian *Jove*
With good *Priam's* sacred drops of blood. —

Bec. Madam, add not imaginary ills
To your so num'rous real ones; let not
The sad remembrance of your former troubles
Swell up your mind, your restless mind with grief.

Hec. O no more, good *Becilla*, I can't hear thee.
[*pauses.*

Heav'ns! what a scene of horror then appear'd

36 THE ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Before my frighted eyes, that dreadful night,
 In which (the king of *Troy*) great *Priam* fell!
 Then at that fatal hour the glories of
 The *Trojan* nation vanish'd, and were lost,
 Like to a pleasing dream, or as I've seen
 The glaring rays of the refulgent sun
 Eclipsed by some intervening cloud,
 And darken'd from our sight; then fell the rich,
 And mighty prince; then *Priam* met his fate. —
 But why shou'd I call *Priam* rich and mighty,
 Who was so poor and mean in happiness?
 That man alone is rich, who, free from strife,
 Leads a contented and a quiet life.
 Let none a great condition happy call;
 The greater height you climb, the lower is your fall.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter PISISTRATUS immediately.

Pis. The greater height you climb, the lower is
 your fall!
 'Tis true indeed: I find it in my self.
 To th' highest pitch of love I rose; from thence
 My fall is more conspicuous, more dreadful. —
 I taught my self to make *Polyxena*
 The only theme to fix my wandring thoughts. —
 In her all my hopes of happiness were center'd.
 And now she's lost, all's misery before me. —
 While she yet liv'd, I saw, I lov'd, I hop'd;
 My love flow'd smoothly on, and I was happy:
 But at her death, the fire before half-smother'd
 Blazes and rages in my breast more furiously.
 So when some river's course is stop'd, the tide
 O'erflows, or forces thro' the way deny'd;
 And tho' before its stream was slow and faint,
 The swelling surge grows mighty by restraint.

The End of the third Act.

ACT



ACT IV. SCENE I.

POLYXENA'S *Body in view.*

Enter PISISTRATUS.

Pis. O'ERFLOW my eyes with tears! Weep
rivers out. —

Let me devote my self to grief, despair. —
Thus will I gaze with sorrow on this sight,
This sight of horror: here I'll curse the hand,
The cruel hand, that ravish'd from my arms
My soul's much dearer part. — Inhuman Greeks,
Next turn your swords on me; you ne'er will find me
So apt and willing to resign my breath,
As at this present moment. — Take my life;
But yet you need not, you have done't already;
Yes, you've ta'en more than life. — If I had been
Your greatest Enemy, you'd hurt me more,
Ev'n more than malice, than revenge cou'd wish.

[looking at the Body.]

Tho' dead and cold, yet charming. — Let me enjoy
One last embrace: Sure *Agamemnon* won't
Sternly forbid it now; tho' cruelty
Before had steel'd his heart, and made him deaf
To all that I requested. — *[embraces the Body.]*

— Oh! she is dead, and never, never knew,
How much I lov'd: for had she known my pains,
She wou'd have pity'd me, and sure have bless'd me:
But yet she knows it now; for death's pow'r can
Sep'rate

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Sep'rate alone, but not reduce to nothing
Her ever-living soul: 'tis now she sees
My passion was unfeign'd, my love unequal'd. —
O cursed *Pyrrhus*! Gods I shall run mad! —
I'll go and seek him, reek my vengeance on him.
His blood will satisfy me, make me pour out
My soul in ease, and meet Death with a smile. [exit.

SCENE changes.

POLYDORE'S *Body brought in on a bier.*

Enter *IRIA* and *BECILLA*.

Ir. One woe succeeds another; new misfortunes
Grow e'ery moment, and augment themselves,
And fall with an united force upon
The head of wretched *Hecuba*.

Bec. O stop those harsh, and most tremendous
words.

Ir. A dreadful message must she hear, of which
I am th' unwilling messenger; but mortals
Do seldom bear one grief alone; and when
Sorrows oppress our minds, they rush on us
Not singly, but in legions.

Enter *HECUBA*.

Madam, alas! prepare yourself to hear
Most heavy tidings from an heavy heart.

Hec. No horrid face of sorrow's new to me:
I've bore so long, that I'm inur'd to suffer.
Nothing can make me more unhappy, than
The troubles, which I've undergone: no ills,
Which *Jove* can send on me, will e'er seem strange,
All *Hecuba's* hopes the Gods have frustrated;
Her lot on earth is nothing, but misfortune.

Ir. You've lost your child.

Hec. What do you tell me of *Cassandra's* fate?

Ir.

The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 39

Ir. Your fears interpret wrong. — Thus undeceive yourself

Hec. O what! My *Polydore*! My son! Thus snatch'd

From these desiring eyes, ev'n in thy bloom!
 What! Are you gone? For ever gone? But I,
 Abandon'd, desolate, alone am left
 To mourn thy loss. — While all my other sons
 Were kill'd by the destructive hand of *Greece*,
 I comforted my self, and often said,
 Yet there's one left: Great *Polymnestor*'s court
 Too did I think a place of refuge for me,
 To shield me from my enemies, and grant
 Me succour and relief in all my sorrows. —
 But see how vain the hopes of mortals are!
 Upon what weak foundations grounded, and
 How often frustrated and disappointed! —
 Where found you him? How was he kill'd? By
 whom?

Ir. I found him on the shore, driv'n up and
 down

By the inconstant winds, and swelling seas.

Hec. O matchless woe! —————

The dreadful visions, that disturb'd my rest,
 Shew'd me a faint resemblance of his loss.
 O 'twas the cursed villain *Polymnestor*,
 That dog of *Thrace* (man is too good a name)
 That treacherously murder'd this my son. —
 Cou'd he then stain with blood these tender limbs?
 And cou'd he thrust his hateful spear into
 This tender breast, and have no touch of pity? —
 But what will not the love of cursed gold
 Excite a man to do? This is the cause
 Of murder, rapine, sacrilege, rebellion;
 This drives out from our breasts remorse of con-
 science,
 And sets us ev'n below the beasts of th' earth. [*exeunt.*

Enter

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Enter PISISTRATUS solus.

O cursed arm ! Why didst thou err, and not
Reach the vile traitor's heart ? Heav'ns ! I'm
distracted ! —

What taste have I for all the sweets of life,
Absent from her I love ? All pleasures, which
The universe affords, seems dull and languid.
All, which the world does call delightful, loses
With me its sweetness; since that, which would make
Me relish all the joys of life, is gone. —
Absent from her, not musick's charms can please ;
And harmony seems most discordant to me. —
Farewel unpleasant world ; I am a member
Divided from thy body. — But, *Atrides*.

Enter AGAMEMNON.

Aga. *Pisistratus*, how is't, that I observe
Thy visage thus disconsolate ? Thy looks
Tell me, thy heart is swollen high with grief.

Pis. My heart's sole joy is lost. No hopes of
comfort

Can ease me, now *Polyxena* is gone :
With her is all my nat'ral gayety
Of temper banish'd, never to return.

Aga. Spend not a moment's thought on her,
young prince ;
At your return to *Greece* some royal dame
Shall meet your wishes, crown your joy, and soon
Bury in dark oblivion the charms
Of *Priam's* captive daughter.

Pis. O never, *Agamemnon*, shall I lose
The dear remembrance of that lovely maid.

Aga. Wou'd one believe, that love cou'd so dis-
figure
A soldier's warlike soul ? — How art thou chang'd
From that *Pisistratus*, which I admir'd,
Riding thro' all the ranks, and animating

His

The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 41

His soldiers courage by his own bright example?
 Then fir'd with a love of glory led
 His conqu'ring troops against the trembling foe?—
 Dispel these gloomy thoughts, and grieve no more
 For a lost captive mistress. — Come, away.
 I see your soul is harass'd and fatigued
 By this immod'rate grief, and asks refreshment. —
 Haste to your tent. Drown in forgetfulness
 All your past troubles. — Come, delay no longer.
[exit PISISTRATUS.]

Enter HECUBA.

Hec. O *Agamemnon*, I'm thy wretched suppliant,
 And on my knees I beg you wou'd redress
 The mighty wrongs I bear. —————

Aga. ————— What is't you'd ask?

Hec. Grief stops my mouth. — O grant it me,
 And ease the hardships of a servile life. —
 D'you see this child, whose fate I now lament?

Aga. I see it. —————

Hec. ———— This is (Why do I say it is?)
 This was my son, the only one, that did
 Survive the fate of fallen *Ilium*.

Aga. Where was he, when your city was destroy'd?

Hec. T' avoid th' impending danger he was sent
 By his father to a foreign land, entrusted
 With *Polymnestor*, king of these dominions.
 The good old man sent with his *Polydore*
 An immense treasure to the king of *Thrace*,
 Who impiously murdered this child
 (His weak and tender arm not able yet
 To wield the sword, or lift the pond'rous shield),
 And threw the breathless body on the shore,
 There to be driven by the boist'rous waves
 Unbury'd, unlamented. —————

Aga. ————— O cursed desire
 Of gold! O harden'd mercenary villain!
 O thou unhappy woman! —————

G

Hec.

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Hec. ————— Hear my tale.

After that *Polydore* had been entrusted
In th' hands of this his wicked guardian,
Oft did the king of *Thrace* visit our court. —
The sacred vow he made there I'll relate,
If in my memory it lives.
One day old *Priam* led the *Thracian* king
To th' altar of Olympian *Jove*, and said,
“ Swear by the God, under whose roof we stand,
“ That you'll be faithful to your trust, that you'll
“ Be mindful of my son, that you'll preserve him
“ From all his *Græcian* foes, that seek his life,
“ That you will succour me in my distress.
“ Swear this, and as thou dost perform thy vow,
“ So may heav'n bless and prosper all thy actions.”
Then thus the *Thracian* King: “ O mighty *Jove*,
“ And all the heav'nly pow'rs, be witnesses
“ To this my sacred vow. If e'er I violate
“ The laws of hospitality, if I
“ Shall e'er deny my kind assistance to
“ Great *Priam's* house; then may the righteous Gods,
“ Then may just heav'n show'r all the curses on me,
“ That e'er were sent on perjur'd, guilty heads.”
And yet this man, this wicked, faithless man,
Murder'd with bloody hands this helpless child.

Ag. Ye Gods, your vengeance is requir'd to keep
In awe a bold, offending, guilty world. —
Where kings transgress, the Gods alone must punish;
Why then, O *Jove*, do you not lift your thunder,
And spend it on this *Thracian* tyrant's head?

Hec. O *Agamemnon*, call him not a king,
Who is unworthy of the rule he bears.
A king! Inhospitable, base, a murd'rer.
Shall greatness then protect his crimes? No; rather
Let him endure the more, that he's abus'd
The pow'r entrusted in his impious hands. —
True, I am weak; but then the heav'nly pow'rs
Are strong, and will at last exert their force

In

The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

43

In punishing the perjur'd, and despisers of
Their justice ; and altho' they long escape
Th' avenging hand of heav'n, yet at length
A certain punishment succeeds their crimes.

Then *Agamemnon* imitate the Gods :

Do justice to the injur'd, and revenge

The contumelies offer'd to the innocent.

These were the paths trod by the Demi-gods.

By actions such as these, the earthly Heroes

Reach'd to the realms of light, and mix'd with
Gods. —

O view me, pity me ; paint my misfortunes

In your own breast, then see how great they are ;

And thy heart will bleed to see thy fellow creature

So miserable. —————

Aga. Thou wretched *Hecuba*, with sorrow do

I hear thy mournful tale. Know, that I'm willing

To punish this fell murderer, but that——

Hec. But what ? O heavens ! He denies me. —

And can you let that mass of villany,

That perjur'd hateful *Thracian* 'scape unpunish'd ?

Aga. The *Grecians* think this man their constant
friend. —

Hec. Then they're deceiv'd, and therefore shou'd
rejoice

At their deceiver's punishment. ————

For can that man who has broke his faith to one

Be a true friend to any ? —————

Aga. His infidelity to you won't prove

Him false to *Greece*, but rather will confirm

Th' unthinking crowd in their ill-grounded notion,

That he is constant to their interests.

Then leave his punishment to those great Gods,

Who with impartial hands distribute justice :

And never think that he escapes unpunish'd,

Whose mind is conscious of such horrid crimes,

As day wou'd blush to look on. — He now bears

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His judge, his witness, his tormentor too
In his own breast. — The Gods redress your wrongs.

Hec. No, no, my soul is all revenge; 'tis sweeter
Than life or liberty; no meaner care
Shall now invade my breast. — My soul thirsts for
This cruel tyrant's blood. — Great Gods, grant me
To sacrifice this barb'rous *Thracian*
To *Polydore's* much-injur'd ghost, and then
To die in ease. I ask no more, ye Gods. —

Atrides, then I beg not your assistance,
But only your permission; if you won't
Redress my wrongs, but yet for love of justice
Hinder me not in the pursuit of my
Most just revenge; if *Polymnestor* die
By *Hecuba's* hand, let *Hecuba* alone —
Bear all the blame of it. If the *Greeks* seek
My life, I care not: For when I shall have
Reveng'd my son, I have no more to do,
But die contentedly. Now leave the rest
To a woman's conduct and contrivances.

Aga. What will you do? How can you e'er expect
A poor weak woman shou'd o'ercome a man?
What strength have you to perfect your designs?

Hec. Within I have some *Trojan* captive women;
The justice of their cause will make 'em strong,
And more than female. —————

O good *Atrides*, safe conduct my servant
Thro' th' army; and heav'n reward you for it.
And let the body of *Polyxena*
Yet lay unmoy'd, 'till I shall send for it;
That one flame may consume my double care
Her, and her brother *Polydore*.

Aga. ————— Be't so
For we must wait a prosp'rous gale of wind.

Hec. *Becilia*, haste to *Polymnestor's* tent.
Tell him, that *Hecuba* desires his presence,
Matters t' impart of great importance to him.

Mean

The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 45

Mean while I will go in, and there contrive
The death of him, that is not fit to live.

[*exeunt* HECUBA, IRIA, BECILLA.

Enter TALTHYBIUS.

Tal. O Great *Atrides*, young *Pisistratus* —

Aga. Ha! Hah! What say'st of him, *Talthybius*?

Tal. Has stabb'd himself. ———

Aga. ——— When? Where?

Tal. As I pass'd by his Tent, I heard a groan,
At which affrighted, unawares I enter'd,
And found him pale, and bloody, wounded in
A mortal part; groaning a second time,
Some others straight came rushing in, and bear him
This way to set him in your sight, *Atrides*.
Hither they bring their most unwelcome load.

Enter two or three, bringing in PISISTRATUS.

Aga. O woeful sight! Distemper to my eyes!
O hapless prince! What means this act of rashness?

Pis. Great *Agamemnon*, surely my misfortunes
May claim your pity, not deserve reproach.
Think, who it was, that brought this rashness on me.
For by the fatal wound, *Polyxena* receiv'd,
Wretched *Pisistratus* despair'd and dy'd.

Aga. O 'tis too true! *Pisistratus*, forgive me.

Pis. Good friends, disturb me not in my last
moments.

Let me employ my thoughts on her, I lov'd,
And I'll expire in extasy, in joy,
My soul's delight! We'll meet among the shades
below,

And there enjoy our loves uninterrupted. —

I feel my soul is flying to its bliss. —

O charming maid, I come, I follow thee. [*dies.*

Aga. Gods! I can't bear it. — Why did I yield up
Polyxena? Why did I hearken to
Greece's Requests so inconsiderately?

Now

46 The ROYAL CAPTIVES.

Now would I fain revoke my rash decree. —
 But that no mortal pow'r can do ; none can
 Recall the time, that's past, the action's done.
 A King may take, but cannot give a life. —
 After that by the deadly sword they've broke
 The thread of life ; after the soul has fled
 To the pale shades of dreary *Erebus*,
 None can recall it thence. — Ye Monarchs, then
 Learn first to weigh th' event of all your actions,
 Before that you determine aught ; for time
 Will ne'er ebb back, will ne'er return again,
 But still keeps on its course irrevocable.
 So when descending showers leave the sky,
 Prone down to earth they fall, on earth they lie ;
 Where first they fell to, there will yet remain,
 And ne'er rise upwards to the heav'ns again.

The End of the fourth Act.



ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter IRIA and BECILLA.

Ir. **T**HE Queen just now is in a frantick fit
 Gone down to the Sea shore, to that same
 place,
 Where the dead corps of *Polydore* was found,
 And there bewails his fate ; curses the impious
Thracian, —
 And calls for vengeance on his wickedness :
 Pleases herself to hear the ecchoing rocks
 Join her complaints, and seem to mourn with her. —
 When she in plaintive accents tells her grief,

La-

Lamenting that her *Polydore's* no more;
 The rocks too answer, *Polydore's* no more :
 And when she says, O *Themis* come revenge
 My wrongs on hated *Polymnestor*, they too
 Seem suppliants to the Gods, that they'd revenge
 Her wrongs on *Polymnestor*. This delights her ;
 She blesses 'em, and calls 'em kind for it :
 She thinks, that her complaints melt 'em to pity,
 And kind condolment of her miseries.

Bee. If any prince thinks, that his state is firm,
 Nor subject to the changes of this life ;
 Let him behold th' unhappy state of *Troy*,
 And its despairing queen : there let him learn
 Not to depend upon the transient joys
 And smiles of fortune : let him well consider,
 That he now stands in that same place, from whence
 The wretched queen of *Ilium* fell. — Her sorrows
 May be compar'd with those of *Niobe* ;
 Yet *Niobe* deserv'd whate'er she suffer'd ;
 Her children's loss was a just punishment
 To her pride ; when she compar'd herself to the
 Fair mother of *Apollo* and *Diana*.

But *Hecuba* is overwhelm'd in
 Tempestuous seas of dire calamities :
 Nor did her guilt ever provoke the Gods
 T' inflict such miseries. — But hold, I think
 It is not meet, that she be left alone,
 Lest her immod'rate sorrow force her to
 Commit some act of violence on herself. [exunt.]

Enter POLYMNESTOR.

Hecuba send for me ! — For what ? — What can
 She want ? — *Hecuba* ! Methinks I dread the name.
 Why do I tremble thus ? What fear ? A woman ! —
 What can she hurt me in ? — But O ! my conscience
 Tells me, how much I've wrong'd this *Hecuba*. —
 What tho' I hide my crime from all mankind ?
 I can't conceal it from my self, and heav'n. —

My

48 THE ROYAL CAPTIVES.

My conscience is a witness to my guilt,
 And still torments me tho' I should escape
 All other punishment. — (But sure no punishment
 Can be so great, as to be conscious, that
 One has deserved it.) — And, O! I dread
 The Gods revenge upon my guilty head. —
 In vain I try t' avoid pursuing guilt;
 Where e'er I fly, it still will follow me. —
 Wretched in life, yet after death more wretched. —
 How shall I show my head, and how be justify'd
 Before th' impartial and all-seeing judges
 Of th' actions of mankind? — There will no false
 Appearances e'er varnish o'er a crime,
 And make it seem (as in this world it will)
 Different from the truth; can't make wrong right,
 Black white, foul fair, lies truth, or baseness noble.
 — But yet the Gods have mercy for offenders,
 That ask it of 'em. — Then I'll pray; but O!
 My guilt so feeds upon my mind, and takes
 Up all my soul, and cannot ask for pardon. —
 What horrid crimes I'm conscious of! I've murder'd
 Him, whom I promis'd, nay and also touching
 The altar swore, and call'd the Gods to witness,
 That I wou'd ever succour. — Impious action!
 Never to be atton'd for! Never pardon'd! —
 O wretched guilty man! Lost *Polynnestor*! —
 What mighty boon to gain did I commit
 This horrid crime? For Gold! — What can gold do?
 Can't ease a troubled mind? Or can it give
 Content? Or free me from the pointed stings of
 A gnawing guilty conscience? No. What pleasure
 Can it afford me, that may counterpoize
 The torment, which I bear, when I reflect
 On the ill means, by which I first obtain'd it? —
 But hah! See *Hecuba*! O all ye Furies,
 Give me a resolution, but to bear
 The sight of her whom I have so much injur'd,
 Without a change of countenance. — O let not

My

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My confus'd looks discover that I'm guilty. —
'Tis punishment enough, that I my self
Am conscious of what I've done.

[walks about disorder'd]

Enter HECUBA and BECILLA.

Hec. Ye Gods give strength to these my feeble hands ;

And crown my just designs with wish'd success ;
That after ages may from hence be taught
The fatal ills, that breach of trust attend. [aside.

Pol. What is't, that *Hecuba* would ask of me ?

Hec. Remember, *Polymnestor*, from my hands
You once receiv'd a child, sprung from the root
Of *Priam* blest'd in a num'rous offspring ;
Tho now, alas ! the last surviving branch
Of all that fertile stock. — My thoughts on him
Employ my anxious days and watchful nights.
Then let me know my doom, in knowing his :
Say, if he lives.

Pol. ————— He lives.

Hec. ————— The gold entrusted
By *Priam* to your care, is it yet safe ?

Pol. No hostile hand has ever robb'd me of it :
Guarded it lies, untouch'd within my court.

Hec. For this good news much thanks to
Polymnestor.

Pol. But what's the business, that did require
Mine and my children's presence here ?

Hec. ————— Hear me.

All the remaining wealth of *Ilium*
(Which tho' it be small I'm willing to preserve)
I wou'd entrust with thee, as thinking thee
My good and faithful friend ; a man, that's firm
And constant to his word, unmov'd, unbias'd
By any views of interest. — Ye Gods !

How hard 'tis for me to dissemble thus ! [aside.

Pol. Where is this treasure hid ? — How is't
conceal'd ?

H

Hec.

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Hec. In the next tent the precious heap is plac'd,
Unknown to the *Achaian* army. —

Pol. In what was then my children's presence
needful?

Hec. That if a sudden unexpected death
Shou'd overtake you, these may still remain
Witnesses of the truth. — Come, haste we in,
Receive the little treasure from my hands.

[*exeunt* HEC. POL.]

Manet BECILLA.

Bec. See how he rushes on destruction;
How willingly he goes to meet his fate!
Plung'd in an unexpected, unforeseen
Abyss of miseries, the just reward
Of his unequal'd crimes. — The Gods are just,
And surely will with 'vengeful hands inflict
A punishment well fitted to his villanies. —
Death is too little: all the racks and tortures,
That have been yet found out, are for less crimes:
So daring a contempt of heaven's vengeance,
And all that's sacred, sure requires a new
Unheard of punishment. — But hark, it thunders.

[*thunders.*]

Tremble ye guilty wretches, whose affrighted
Souls dread the justice of the Heav'nly Pow'rs:
Let them whose monstrous villanies must fly
The hated light; let them alone be struck
With horror and amazement at the thunder
Of great Olympian *Jove*; while we, whose souls
Are pure, and stain'd with no such spots of vice,
Remain, tho' ev'n the universe shou'd fall
From its well-order'd state to wild confusion,
Secure undaunted. — But see, *Iria* comes,
And greets me with such pleasant Looks, as are
The nat'ral consequence of success.

Enter IRIA.

Ir. Gods of revenge be still: your work is done.
He'll see no more the cursed treasure, which

He

The ROYAL CAPTIVES. 51

He murder'd *Polydore* to gain. ———

Bec. ——— What, is he kill'd?

Ir. No, no; he lives depriv'd of light and comfort,
When he came in eager with expectations,
And glutted with the hopes of treasure, that
His safety was the least of's care or thoughts;
The band of *Trojan* women unsuspected
Seiz'd him, and bound him fast. In this condition
He saw his children strangled: while he sometimes
Moan'd for his children's loss, then swell'd to rage,
And curs'd the queen, the *Trojan* captives thrust
An iron hot and burning from the fire
Into his eye; the blood gush'd out; the ball
Of sight straight follow'd it, and left its orb.
This equal'd his pain t' his grief; the sorrow,
He suffer'd for his children's death, was chang'd
To an impatience of the raging torments,
He bore by the avulsion of his eye-ball.
Nor was this all he underwent; but then
His other light, which yet remain'd untouch'd,
By the same means was soon extinguish'd,
And torn out from its seat. — See, where he comes;
The captives have unbound him; hither he bends
His wandring steps in tortures exquisite.

Enter POLYMNESTOR blind, HECUBA following.

The Body of POLYDORE brought in on a bier.

Pol. O curse on this revengeful sex! O hell?
Turn all thy tortures on this bloody woman.
Not heav'n has Gods of aspect more serene;
Nor hell a soul more furious. ———
When she appears your friend, 'tis then she is
Your greatest enemy, and while she smiles, destroys.
—O torment, and extremity of anguish! —
My children kill'd too! — Weep for 'em I cannot,
Unless it be in blood. — I shall run mad
With pain and tortures. — Where's this *Hecuba*?
Let me come to her. — Let me tear her body.
Nought but her life shall satisfy my rage. —

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But hold. Where am I? — To whom do I speak?
O *Phæbus* let no more thy cherishing rays
Comfort this bloody-minded barb'rous creature;
But dart contagion on her cursed head. —

Gape, earth, and swallow her. Let her no more
Enjoy the light, she has depriv'd me of. —
Quick lightnings blast her and her hateful race. —
O torments insupportable! — O Earth!

O Heav'ns! O Gods! relieve me, bring assistance.

Hec. Talk not of Heav'n and Gods, thou perjur'd
mortal;

Can you believe there are such things? — No rather
Let your lips utter nothing, but of Hell,
Of racks, and whips, and fires, and tortures us'd
To punish such, such guilty souls as thine.

Pol. O cursed barb'rous woman, art thou there?
Dar'st thou to look on me, in th'innocent
Blood of whose children thou'st imbru'd thy hands?

Hec. Hold, *Polymnestor*, talk not so, consider
It was not me, no but your wicked self,
That bath'd their murd'ring hands in innocent blood.
What I did, all was done in just revenge;
What you bear, you deserve. Those very crimes,
Of which you now accuse me, you yourself
Alone are guilty. Thus in condemning
Me you approve my justice, and confess,
Your crimes are well rewarded, duly punish'd.

Pol. O 'tis too true! How deeply does she sting
My wounded Conscience! — But Gods! Can I bear
These sharp reproaches from a female slave? —
No, I will be reveng'd, were 't only for
My children's sake. — O *Agamemnon*, hear me;
Punish the insolence of these your captives.

Enter AGAMEMNON.

Aga. What voice was that, which I heard ecchoing in
The hollow rocks? —————

Pol. ————— A man's, whose injuries
Shou'd roar, ev'n while they shake the universe. —
Behold

Behold *Atrides*, and behold with pity
The great calamities, I suffer from
The hands of captives, yes thy female captives;
Hecuba and her cursed band of *Trojans*.

Aga. What was it thy hand, *Hecuba*, that did
This cruel, bloody action? —————

Hec. ————— Great *Atrides*,
Condemn not what I've done, 'till you have heard
The reason, why I did so. See the body
Here of my murder'd child.—This was the work
Of that fell villain. — Had he but his sight
To see the blood he spilt, ev'n the remembrance
Of that most horrid act wou'd make his soul
Shiver and start with guilt. — He swore by th' Gods
That he'd preserve this child; yet for the sake
Of cursed lucre basely murder'd him.

Aga. O *Polymnestor*, wicked perjur'd man,
How cou'd you call on me for vengeance?
Did you believe, that I'd protect such crimes,
As stain the Name of honour with a blot,
Such as an harden'd villain 'd tremble at?
Dare you confess your crime?

Hec. Since your sight cannot, let your touch
condemn you. [puts *POLYDORE's* Body into
POLYMNESTOR's arms.

Pol. What do I hold within my arms? The corps
Of murder'd *Polydore*? — O Heav'n, forgive me! —

Aga. Nay, if 't be so, then let his punishment
Be now completed. —————

Pol. ————— For the love of mercy
Good *Agamemnon*, kill me not, I pray thee.

Hec. I'd have thee live. — To die's an happiness
You don't deserve. — The person, that believes
He's acted his severest part, when he
Has for some monstrous crime bereav'd th' offender
Of Life, han't learnt, and knows not how to be
A tyrant. No, to live, and live in mis'ry,
Shou'd be the punishment of the greater villains,
Of *Polymnestor's*. This is something worse than death,
And

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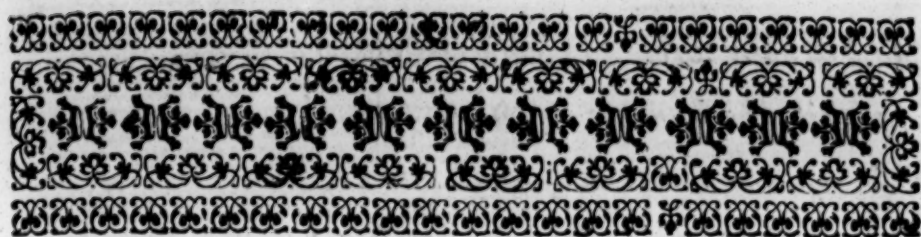
And what's still more, worse than the fear of death,
I know't ; and of this truth I'm an example.

Aga. Then straight convey him to those unfrequented
Mountains, that were witnesses of his guilt ;
Whose tops are stain'd by the blood of *Polydore*.
There let him spend the remnant of his days,
With the remembrance of his former crimes
To prey upon his soul, ev'n as the vulture
Daily consumes the liver of *Prometheus*.
There let him comfortless suffer the hardships
Of cold and hunger, and at last there die
Despairing ; without hopes of mercy after
His impious life of the propitious Gods.

*Here see the justice of impartial Heav'n,
To ev'ry one his due reward is giv'n.
Inscrutable the paths, unknown the ways,
By which Great Jove his equity displays :
But this we all agree in, this we know ;
The vengeance of the Gods is certain, tho' 'tis slow.*

F I N I S.





T H E
E P I L O G U E,

Design'd to have been Spoken.

WHAT strange unnat'ral thing these Poets write!
Why I protest it is enough to fright
A modern Belle, to see this moralizing,
This whimsical young Author merely prizing
A Lady for her Courage. — Out of nature!
Refuse a prince's love, and think it better
To die! — O monstrous! — But he'll say, I know,
Such Ladies were two thousand Years ago, —
But that won't down with a St. James's beau.
By the old Laws of his Athenian Daddies,
Thinks he to rule our Freeborn English Ladies?
No, they'll insist on their Prerogative,
Just as they please to love, and as they please to live. —

Had

EPILOGUE.

*Had it been wrote to please the modern Stage,
And hit the humour of the present Age,
Polyxena enamour'd by his Charms,
Instead of Death's, had fled to her Lover's Arms.*

*But hold — I came the Poet to defend. —
He's young, and with encouragement may mend:
Why then e'en save his Play: ne'er cast him down;
But give him time to better know the Town.*



